

TOWN OF EASTON, MARYLAND
Workshop
Council's Chambers
11 S. Harrison Street

December 14, 2009

PRESENT AT CONVENING

9 Council President John F. President Ford	12 Councilmember Leonard E. Wendowski
10 Councilmember Kelley K. Malone	13 Councilmember Megan M. Cook
11 Councilmember Pete Leshner	

Also in attendance were Town Manager Mr. Karge, Town Attorney Ms. Van Emburgh, Town Planner Mr. Hamilton, Long Range Planner Mr. Thomas, Current Planner Mr. Smith and Town Clerk Mrs. Ruf.

Members of the Planning Commission present were Chairman Mr. John Atwood, Mr. Dan Swann, Mr. Steve Periconi and Ms. Linda Cheezum.

Mayor Willey was excused.

WORKSHOP

President Ford welcomed those present and gave opening remarks.

Mr. Thomas discussed changes relative to the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that tonight's meeting was essentially a continuation of one held in November where the Council and Commission identified three issues for further discussion. These were Connectivity, the inclusion of a 1% growth rate in the Plan, and the priority growth designation of the Gannon/Lowe's properties. Mr. Thomas suggested we could dispense with one issue; that of the designation of the Gannon/Lowe's property in the vicinity of the proposed Hospital site, rather quickly as the Commission agreed with the Council to change this back to a Priority 3 designation.

President Ford suggested the discussion of connectivity. President Ford stated we should take the lines off the map.

Mr. Atwood stated that he has become tired of the discussion of the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that he wants to bring this to fruition and get it done.

Messrs. Moore and Periconi stated that they have been married to this connectivity issue for months.

Mr. Swann stated that he understands that this is a work in progress. The town does not build roads. The developer should build roads.

Mr. Atwood stated that he is not in favor of taking lines off comp plan regarding the connectivity of roads.

Mr. Hamilton stated that taking the lines out will miss the whole opportunity to make the roads work. This has been a Long Range planning issue that has been part of Town Plans since the 70s.

He stated that the Planning Commission sent the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Council and agrees with the proposed concept.

There was discussion of the collector road and whether it would be being built in 40 years was discussed.

Mr. Hamilton stated that a few parts of the collector road have been built.

President Ford stated that the Council needs to take a more comprehensive and detailed look at the roads on the east side of town.

65 Annexation and roads were discussed.

66
67 Ms. Malone stated that connectivity is necessary when looking at the big picture addressing
68 traffic and developments and future residents of the town of Easton.

69
70 Mr. Smith stated that some residents are bringing subjective self interest concerns when voicing
71 concerns about not wanting roads whereas it is our job to look out for the interests of the entire
72 community.

73
74 Ms. Malone suggested educating realtors on prospective roads.

75
76 President Ford stated that the Comprehensive draft was presented with consensus from Planning
77 Commission and asked if there are changes or objections regarding changes on the east side
78 regarding connectivity.

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80 Mr. Leshar stated that he is prepared to support the Comprehensive Plan as drafted.

81
82 The discussion then moved to the issue of including a 1% Growth Rate in the Plan and what it
83 means if we do. Mr. Thomas stated that in summary, when the Planning Commission
84 reconsidered this issue, they suggested keeping the Plan basically as is but tweak language to not
85 be so explicit. He stated that they would like to see growth occur over the longer term closer to
86 our long-term historical average of 1% but doesn't direct staff to implement growth controls.

87
88 Discussion occurred regarding approximately 600 vacant homes with 400 approved to be built. If
89 the market bounces back there will already be a vast inventory of vacant houses.

90
91 Mrs. Cook stated that a 1% growth rate is unrealistic.

92
93 Mr. Wendowski stated that the new water and sewer plant was predicated on 3% growth.

94
95 Mr. Periconi stated that the council could legislate growth for 1% making this more aspirational.
96 He stated that he is in minority for 1% growth rate.

97
98 Discussion occurred regarding using annexation for primarily controlling growth rate.

99
100 Mr. Leshar asked if there is a provision in the Comprehensive Plan to tighten I-1. Mr. Thomas
101 stated that there is.

102
103 President Ford stated that he has few minor issues of concern. 1) Growth rate and the section on
104 EVFD. He stated that there is some inference that there is currently a volunteer fire department;
105 2) heading called services and the burden on areas outside of Town Boundaries (again, a fire
106 department issue) 3) area 4 intersection of chapel road and Route 50 uses that should go there.
107 He suggested the deletion of convenience gas stations and transient oriented businesses.

108
109 Ms. Malone stated that in reviewing the Plan, there were a number of people that talked to her
110 about parking issues. She stated that there is a need to outline concrete plan to address parking
111 issues in town; perceived and projected parking problems.

112
113 She asked that the Plan address the ability to be able to walk and bike safely in town.

114
115 She asked that the reality of pollution and effect of expansion of airport be recognized and that
116 the county does have some decisions on the future expansion of the runway.

117
118 Mrs. Cook discussed the listing on page 143 and the inclusion of public schools as park land.

119
120 Mrs. Cook asked that Mr. Hause be required to submit a tree plan to know yearly where trees are
121 going to be planted.

122
123 President Ford asked that the so-called "John White" language calling for "incentive annexation"
124 be deleted.

126 Ms. Malone asked that the RTC Park Plan be incorporated as there was so much work done. She
127 stated that it would be nice to summarize all those surveys and ideas that had been suggested by
128 the committee.

129
130 Mr. Leshner stated that in the Parks & Recreation section there is a certain amount of duplication.
131 He stated that the expansion of the rails-to-trails is addressed in the transportation section but
132 gets light treatment in parks and recreation section.

133
134 Discussion occurred regarding the Economic Development section.

135
136 Discussion occurred regarding the completion of the broadband. Mr. Wendowski stated that it
137 has been completed to Parole and should be one small connection away from being available
138 throughout the Shore.

139
140 President Ford discussed the next step. He stated that the suggestions will go back to Planning
141 Commission. They need to bless everything here tonight then goes to council to have public
142 hearing set. He stated that the public hearing may be the first meeting in February. He stated that
143 the Public Hearing can be set at the next Council meeting.

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145 The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

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Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk